

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 06396 211056Z

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5726

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

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S E C R E T AMMAN 6396

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, SY, EG, XF

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER RIFAI ON ARAB NEXT STEPS

1. MORNING SEPTEMBER 21 PRIME MINISTER HELD BRIEF
DISCUSSION WITH ME ON JORDANIAN PLANS AND THINKING ON
NEXT STEPS IN THE AREA.

2. HE SAID SYRIA HAD OR WOULD SHORTLY INFORM US
OFFICIALLY THAT SECRETARY SHOULD VISIT DAMASCUS IN
OCTOBER ONLY IF HE IS PREPARED WITH A SUBSTANTIVE
POSITION ON GOLAN WITHDRAWALS. IN ADDITION, SYRIA
SAID THEY WOULD NOT CONSIDER NEXT STEP UNLESS THERE
WAS ALSO AN ISRAELI POSITON, PRESUMABLY FORTHCOMING,
ON THE WEST BANK AND THE PALESTINIANS. RIFAI ADDED
WITH A SMILE THAT SYRIA WOULD POSSIBLY BE PREPARED TO DROP
LATTER TWO CONDITIONS ON THE BASIS OF SOMETHING FORTHCOMING
ON THE GOLAN.

3. KING HUSSEIN WILL RETURN TO AMMAN FROM AQABA LATE
SEPTEMBER 21. HE WILL THEN GO TO SYRIA IN NEXT FEW DAYS
SPENDING ONE NIGHT THERE. HE PLANS TO DISCUSS WITH ASAD
NEXT STEP, INCLUDING SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE
OF PATCHING THINGS UP WITH SADAT.

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PAGE 02 AMMAN 06396 211056Z

4. RIFAI SAID KING WILL ENDEAVOR TO PERSUADE ASAD AND

SADAT, AND KING KHALID IF HE WILL COME, TO GET TOGETHER IN AMMAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. RIFAI HOLDS OUT SOME HOPES THAT THIS PLAN CAN TAKE EFFECT.

5. RIFAI SAID THEY ARE STILL WAITING TO HEAR FROM EGYPTIAN VICE PRESIDENT MUBARAK ABOUT A VISIT HERE. THEY BELIEVE EGYPTIANS MAY NOW BE WAITING UNTIL KING GETS BACK FROM SEEING ASAD. KING STILL PLANS TO GO TO EGYPT AFTER ID.

6. COMMENT: JORDANIANS SEEM TO BE THROWING THEMSELVES INTO INTER-ARAB PROCESS WITH A VENGEANCE AND A TOUCH OF MEGALOMANIA. WHETHER THEY CAN ACTUALLY PERSUADE LEADERS TO COME HERE IS DIFFICULT TO ANSWER FROM THIS VANTAGE, BUT SEEMS SOMEWHAT PROBLEMATIC. WE UNDERSTAND FROM PRESS AND OTHER REPORTS THAT KHALID MAY BE PLANNING A SIMILAR GET TOGETHER IN SAUDI ARABIA SHORTLY. WE SUSPECT HIS EFFORT WOULD, IF ACTUALLY ON THE TRACK, GET TOP BILLING OVER JORDAN. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT JORDANIANS ARE TREATING THEIR DESIRE TO PATCH UP DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SADAT AND ASAD AS A MORE SERIOUS PROPOSITION THAN IT HAS BEEN HERETOFORE -- UP TO NOW SEEMINGLY ONLY A CONVENIENT EXCUSE FOR NOT TAKING A MORE POSITIVE STAND ON THE SINAI ACCORD. END COMMENT.

7. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT PASS JIDDA.
PICKERING

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